



The New Page Park

DESIGN NARRATIVE

GREENSWEEP LLC

FEBRUARY 2022

INTRODUCTION & GOALS

The goal of any urban outdoor public space should be to provide multiple ways for visitors to commune with the outdoors in their own unique ways. Pathways for walking and jogging, gathering areas for conversations or quiet contemplation, space for unstructured play or recreation, and a variety of natural plantings to provide stimulation to the senses are all characteristics any municipality should seek to achieve in their public parks. William Tyler Page Park represents an opportunity to achieve these ideals with a refreshed design and layout. This dramatic reimagining of Page Park by GreenSweep will give the residents of Friendship Heights a beautiful public park, one they will be excited to use and proud to share.

Page Park is currently an “unpolished gem,” waiting for the right configuration and ideas to transform it and maximize its potential. It has high traffic but low optimization. It is extensively used by residents, with a near-constant flow of pedestrians during the day, but those visitors rarely linger in the park longer than the time it takes to walk a pet, or pass through to an adjacent connecting path. The park provides outdoor open space, a connection to the adjacent woodlands, limited room for residents and visitors to walk their pets, a few benches...and little more.

The new Page Park will be inviting and interesting, with a network of walking paths and multiple access points drawing visitors to enjoy a variety of outdoor gathering areas. Landscape elements will connect the park to the surrounding natural woodlands and make the new Page Park a unique space all its own. Native plantings, natural building materials and optimized viewsheds will stimulate the senses of visitors and transform Page Park from unpolished gem to a sparkling emerald in the heart of Friendship Heights.

ACCESS & CIRCULATION

Before anyone can enjoy a park, they must first be drawn to enter it—and then they must be enticed to explore the space with logical circulation patterns. Page Park currently has a single narrow entrance at the southeast corner, directly adjacent to a loading dock. The new design preserves and improves this access point, but it is no longer the primary entrance. Instead, a dramatic, sweeping set of natural stone steps greets visitors at the southwest corner of the park. This broad opening befitting of a major outdoor space is inviting to pedestrians and aesthetically appealing. The steps, with multiple landings built in to allow for a gradual climb, lead to a large circular plaza. This central plaza serves as the hub for varied circulation patterns through the rest of the space.

Visitors can move along hardscaped primary paths with natural stone through the multiple built plazas and patios, or traverse crushed river stone secondary circulation routes to access the more natural offerings of Page Park. The lawn space directly beyond the central plaza is at grade with the plaza floor, with no obstructions, encouraging pedestrians to venture onto the lawn for dog-walking, picnics or relaxation. On the western side of the park, the children's play space has an unstructured and rustic aesthetic, with a soft pine fines surface and no defined circulation paths, encouraging children's imagination and allowing pedestrians to experience it on their own terms.

A pedestrian can enter the park from any of the three entrances (southwest, southeast, northeast) and experience the entire space without ever doubling back or hitting a “dead end” while moving across a wide variety of paths and surfaces. With easy access and logical circulation, the new Page feels more expansive, more inviting, and more stimulating to visitors.

GATHERING SPACES

For any park, variety in gathering spaces leads to variety in visitor experiences, allowing for multiple simultaneous activities and encouraging visitors to return to the park time and again. Each time they may discover a new spot or view they never enjoyed before. The new Page Park is dynamic and multipurpose without being cluttered or overbuilt. It offers visitors the chance to enjoy the outdoors in solitude or in groups, to move swiftly through or to linger, with a diverse amount of gathering spaces.

The large central plaza is the hub of the new Page Park, anchored by a visually stimulating fountain or sculpture. On the south edge of the central plaza, a sweeping wrought iron and stone pergola provides shade for visitors sitting on the curved natural stone benches and draws the eye of pedestrians on the adjacent street. By orienting this primary seating area with its back to the street, the new Page Park immediately focuses visitors' attentions on the natural settings to the north. A visitor can enter Page Park, sit beneath the pergola, and allow the sweeping viewshed of the woodland to open before them.

Two smaller circular patios, also constructed of natural stone, extend out from the central plaza to the northwest and southeast. These smaller patios allow for more intimate gatherings around tables or on curved stone benches. The southeast patio serves as a secondary "entrance court" to the park, while the northwest patio is slightly sunken, giving visitors a greater sense of privacy and increasing the perceived scale of the surrounding existing oaks.

The existing stone patio on the far northwest edge of the park is retained in the new design, now reimagined as a communal space with charcoal grill stations. The space is opened up to allow for direct access from the adjacent plazas to the south, and the removal of walls and vegetation on the east side ensure the patio is no longer hidden and inaccessible.

Stretching beyond the central plaza down to the woodlands is the redesigned lawn space. Reduced in size, it is reimagined to seamlessly integrate with the circular, curvilinear character of the new Page Park. The lawn meets the central plaza at grade, inviting visitors out onto the lush greenery. It then steps down to the woodland line with a series of natural stone ledges, which provide additional sitting areas.



LANDSCAPE ELEMENTS

The landscape elements of the new Page Park incorporate many of the existing trees into a new plant palette with a strong focus on native vegetation. Plants and construction materials are carefully selected and arranged to give a natural yet organized feel to the park. The hillside along the southern edge is transformed from a simple lawn area into a dramatic terraced ecosystem full of grasses, flowers, mounding shrubs, and specimen evergreens. Fieldstone boulders matching those used in the lawn ledges create rough terraces along the slope, surrounded by plants attractive to pollinators and other wildlife. The hillside is full of color, movement, shape and texture.

The unstructured play area on the west side of the park is framed with shade-loving native shrubs, arranged to provide screening while simultaneously inviting exploration and play. The play structures themselves are not metal or plastic, but wood. Not only does this match the aesthetic of the overall park, but it is economical and sustainable. Cut stumps, anchored logs and beams, and whimsical elements provide stimulation to the imagination without dictating any specific activity.

The center of the large plaza will contain a water feature or sculpture. The precise look, materials, construction and definition of this element can be determined through a future public art competition, allowing the Village to decide what shall occupy a place of such importance.

Whether experienced from ground level as one moves through the space, or from above as a neighboring resident gazes down from a high rise balcony, the new Page Park will look and feel as if it is *built of* the surrounding landscape, rather than *built in* it.